

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILÉATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1646

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1646.

Witness

Michael McDunphy, B.L.,
25, St. Lawrence Road,
Clontarf,
Dublin.

Identity.

Section Commander, 'C' Coy., 2nd Battn.,
Dublin Brigade.

Subject.

Easter Week, 1916.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

File No S. 1600.

Form B.S.M. 2

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STATEMENT BY MR. MICHAEL McDUNPHY,

25, St. Lawrence Road, Clontarf, Dublin.

I do not know if it is elsewhere on record that, during the Rising of 1916, a field gun was mounted by the British at the head of Cole's Lane where it joins Parnell Street, and was used in the bombardment of some of the posts held by the Irish Volunteers, presumably the General Post Office.

I personally saw the gun at that point, with its trail resting in a hole created by the removal of some of the paving stones, whether for the purpose of anchoring the gun against the recoil, or lowering the back, in order to get more elevation, I do not know, and with the muzzle pointing down southwards towards Henry St. I do not know what type of gun it was. It looked to me like a twelve pounder. It may have been a howitzer. It was definitely not a trench mortar of the type with which readers of news of the war in France were familiar at the time.

The circumstance in which I saw the gun and heard it being fired, are set out in the following paragraphs.

On Easter Monday, my wife and I came from our home in Clonliffe Road, Dublin, to visit her mother, Mrs. Stanley, who owned a dairy at 36, Parnell Street, which is about thirty yards to the west of Cole's Lane, on the south side of the street. Early in the week, British troops took possession of the street, and people then in the houses were not permitted to leave. Shortly after, we all heard the

field gun being fired at intervals. The effect was particularly noticeable in the house in which I was. It was a very old one, and it shook every time the gun was fired. Plaster fell from some of the ceilings. My wife clearly remembers the firing and the effect on the house and people who were in it.

I remember remarking to someone that, with such a bombardment, there would be very little left of Arnott's drapery store, which faced directly into the southern end of Cole's Lane. To my surprise, I saw subsequently that Arnott's was not damaged at all, and it was obvious that the gun must have been aimed towards some entirely different objective.

In the House at 36, Parnell Street, with me and my wife and a number of others who had taken shelter there, was her brother, the late Joseph M. Stanley, who, in the earlier part of the week, moved back and forward between the Post Office and his printing office, the Gaelic Press, in Liffey Street, with manuscript messages in P.H. Pearse's handwriting which he printed in the "War News" of that week. I saw these messages at the time, and had them subsequently in my possession on loan. They are now, or were up to a year or so ago, in the possession of the late J.M. Stanley's eldest son, Colbert (John), who lives at 8, Bolton Street, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Early in Easter Week, the upper portion, including the roof, of the Gaelic Press went on fire from some cause, whether accidental or otherwise, I do not know, but I do recollect seeing Mr. Walker, an elderly man, Joseph M. Stanley's father-in-law, coming into the house where I was and reporting that the fire had taken place and that he had

succeeded in putting it out. He was in a state of exhaustion, and his beard and hair were badly burned.

After Parnell St. had been occupied by British troops, a British officer visited each house to try and find out the whereabouts of a sniper who was giving the British a great deal of trouble.

Towards the end of the week - I think it was on Friday - every man in all the houses in the vicinity was ordered out by the British, escorted some distance away into Lower Dominick St., which is almost a continuation of Cole's Lane, and finally released. It was then that I saw the gun in position. Most of us thought at first that we were going to be shot, as some of the officers seemed to be in a bad humour, and many wills were made on that occasion.

Early in the week, after the beginning of the Rising but before the British had taken possession of the street - it may have been on Tuesday or Wednesday - I saw John O'Mahony in civilian clothes, walking along the centre of Parnell Street from the direction of Parnell Monument and towards Capel St. John O'Mahony, a big, heavily built man, well over six feet in height, was accompanied by a very much smaller man who, it was subsequently suggested to me, may have been Laurence Raul. Neither of them appeared to be armed, but O'Mahony carried an umbrella which he brandished threateningly at anybody who did not immediately obey his instructions, *to get in off the streets, which was echoing to the noise of continuous shooting.*

The incident left an indelible impression on my mind, not only because of the courage shown by these two men in ignoring for themselves the danger from which they sought to

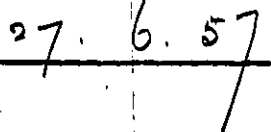
protect others, but because of the lighter factor of the extraordinary contrast in size between the two men. John O'Mahony was arrested after the Rising and either imprisoned or interned. I am not sure whether his companion was. They are both dead now.

In the instalment of Major-General Piaras Beasley's story of the Rising which appeared in the 'Irish Independent' on Monday, 20th instant, he mentions that he received information from a private source that Linenhall barracks was not adequately guarded, and it was thereupon seized by the Volunteers and set on fire. That information was given by me to a Volunteer, and was gathered by me from a conversation which I overheard between two frightened occupants of the barracks who were out shopping at the time.

Signed:


 (M. McDunphy)

Date:



Witness:



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